1736. (Transferred to the 6th December, 1988)

Import duty on Newsprint

1737. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to increase import duty on newsprint to 40 per cent;

(b) what is the growth of circulation of newspaper per 1000 inhabitants in the country;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the growth of circulation of newspapers is the lowest in the country as compared to other countries of the world;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the disproportionate high cost of newsprint and its low quality along with other restrictions has stunted the growth of circulation of newspapers; and

(e) the steps Government propose to take to reach the growth norms recommended by the UNESCO, for developing countries in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) As per the information contained in the Report of the Second Press Commission, the number of dailies and weeklies increased by 250 per cent and 300 per cent respectively in three decades from 1952. Similarly, circulation of dailies and weeklies went up by 423.9 per cent and 327.94 per cent respectively during this period. It is also stated that India has the second largest number of daily newspapers in Asia and the fourth largest in the world. But the circulation of newspapers relative to population is not high. The diffusion rate for 1000 population in 1975 was 15.4 copies and 19.7 copies in 1979. Low literacy, low income, lack of communication facilities etc. are generally regarded as the main reasons for low per capita availability of newspapers. Government have been taking various measures for the sustained and balanced growth of newspapers consistent with the policy of non-interference with the internal functioning and freedom of the press.

Expert Committee regarding small and medium newspapers

1738. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether any time limit has been fixed for the 17 member expert Committee constituted to look into the problems being faced by small and medium newspapers to submit its report; and

(b) if so, by when the Committee is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) The first meeting of the Expert Committee on Small and Medium Newspapers was held on 21-11-88. The Committee is expected to give its Report within three months.

Refusal for registration by Employment Exchange

1739. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister o LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Employment Exchange in some States have refused to register the names of the diploma holders of the Institute of Public Health and Hygiene, New Delhi, whose Diplomas are recognised approved/recommended by Governments of several States;

(b) whether the attention of Government has been drawn by the said Institute to the provisions of the Article 14, 16 and 19 of the Constitution of India and whether it has been claimed by the Institute that their Diploma holders are eligible for employment in Government and private sector and are eligible for registration in the Employment Exchanges on the basis of